Letters to the Editor
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Ongoing Miracle!

I have been reading Hinduism Today for the past five years with utmost relish and avidity. I run two temples in my area and I refer quite often to articles published in your newspaper. Of high interest is your super edition of November, '95 relating aspects of Dugdha Ganapati, as I personally term the milk miracle. Lord Ganesha is my cherished deity and I am always searching to learn about His mysticism. May Lord Ganesha bless all Hindus in ascending above the muladhara chakra,and may He also bless non-Hindus in understanding the wonder of God as displayed by Him.

Pooran Ram, Trinidad, West Indies

My first thoughts upon reading of the disrespectful and cynical treatment of the Lord Ganesha's milk miracles in the press, [Jan. 1996] particularly the Indian press, were two quotes, one from the Apollo astronaut Edgar Mitchell: "There are no unnatural or supernatural phenomena, only very large gaps in our knowledge of what is natural. We should strive to fill those gaps of ignorance;" and the other from Neem Karoli Baba: "When a pickpocket meets a saint, all he sees are pockets." How very sad indeed when we become so fixated on the physical and material realm that we can no longer recognize the spiritual and the miraculous in our lives!

Jeri Becker, Frontera, California, USA

I took part in the annual International Festival held at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte last September. The Indian students had taken a local newspaper article about the Ganesha miracle, enlarged the article and displayed it at our India exhibition. One young Indian gentleman walked up to me and in a rather disturbed tone of voice stated: "Please remove that (the article about Ganesha). It is embarrassing."

As Hinduism Today pointed out in the December issue, this is not the first "miracle" the Sanatana Dharma has witnessed. Most important is the fact that this is not the first time a miracle involving murthishas taken place. As I said to the young Indian gentleman: "If this sort of thing has happened in Christianity, why can't it take place in our faith?"

Why did this miracle happen at this point in time? God physically accepted our offerings to remind us that we are never far from His grace.

Shakti Ganapati Subramaniam, Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Sundry Encomiums

Hinduism Today is a very good journalistic effort. Just in that one newspaper you're doing a great job for humanity. When one talks about religion, when one talks about propagating a way of life, one is talking about the missionary effect that one can have. What you are doing is much more than an entire army of priests would be able to do by physically going to places around the world. You are penetrating all four corners of the earth.

Yves Vaz, Bharat Ratna, Hong Kong

Life is just a void without reading Hinduism Today monthly. Your November issue with the miracle of Lord Ganesha drinking milk was fantastic.

K.S. Mohan, Jitra, Kedah, Malaysia

Wrong on Nairs

A statement has been made in the article on Kerala that "Nair women can have as many husbands as they want." [Feb. 1996 issue]. I was raised in a Nair Taravad fifty years ago when maternal combined families were quite strong in Kerala. I have not seen or heard anywhere in my village or nearby villages of a Nair woman having more than one husband. A statement like that is not based of fact.

The article also says men had little say in the household affairs and received "very little" property at the time of partition.

In my family as well as other Nair families I know, the ruler of the house always had been the dominant male "karnavar." Karanavars words were final and were not usually questioned. Men and women had equal rights in the house. Family property was divided equally among all members born into the "combined family" irrespective sex.

Being a Nair, I am definitely proud of my matriarchal family traditions. The system protected women and gave them equal rights. The Matriarchal family system helped us keep social evils like dowry away until recently. Unfortunately, the system which protected women and gave them freedom envied by women in the rest of India, also caused the downfall of the Nair

combined family system. Ablebodied young men had no incentive to work on family property since they had to share the property with all members of the combined family at the time of partition. Young unemployed men moved into the wife's family, produced children and over time encouraged their spouse to seek partition.

Changarath Vikraman, Nair Benevolent Association,Brentwood, New York, USA

There are Defenders

Although Hindus living in America may face disconcerting antagonists such as Pat Robertson, we have a powerful ally in the American Constitution and the Bill of Rights, adamantly defended by the American Civil Liberties Union. However, even these institutions are not unassailable.

Pat Robertson's other group, the American Center for Law and Justice, which fights legal battles against the 1st Amendment, has grown in just four years from a $500,000 annual budget to one that last year surpassed $13 million. They seek to take over local school boards in order to censor material they don't like from textbooks and libraries to require the teaching of creationism and generally to run the public schools from a narrow fundamentalist Christian point of view.

I personally was impressed by the ACLU's out-front denunciation of these activities and its determination to thwart the efforts of the religious right to nullify other religions and establish its own supremacy. It might behoove Hindus living in the United States to support the ACLU. The address is 132 West, 43rd St. New York, New York 10036-6599.

Gayatri Rajan, Canyon, California, USA, MCI ID: 323 7100

Sai Baba's News

During 1995, Sathya Sai Baba, probably the guru with the largest following in India, celebrated his 70th birthday. Over one million people were at his ashram to celebrate with him. The Sai Foundation also spent about $670 million to bring water to the people in Andra Pradesh. The Sai Ashram also houses a hospital where about 1,000 free heart operations were performed in 1995.

Frank Greenhalgh, grindle@pb.net

Religion in the UN

Religious Non Governmental Organizations (RNGO) are linked together through a special Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to offer a forum to RNGOs for promoting shared religious values and to look at global issues from religious perspectives.

The UN is the only global forum where all issues are discussed and it needs the moral leadership of the different religious and spiritual traditions to better act on these issues. The UN offers the only true global "bible" with its books being the documents of the decisions at the UN Conferences.

The UN challenges all religions to work together and to create programs for greater mutual understanding.

Father Luis M. Dolan, CP, New York City, New York, USA

Our Apologies

In our February "Letters" Yogi Rummun of Mauritius rightly complains about our August, 1995, report on Course 9014 on Hinduism which he has been instrumental in putting into action in his country. It was most certainly our oversight to not double check our report. Course 9014 is, in fact, a commendable effort to fulfill a much needed lack in teaching Hinduism to youth. We apologize for the difficulties caused as a result of our article.